

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
CONGRESSMAN TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
July 15, 2004

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Davis Applauds House Re-Authorization of
D.C. Tuition Assistance Program

Program Has Helped Thousands of D.C. Students Pay for College

Washington, D.C. - House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) is pleased to report that H.R. 4012, legislation to extend the District of Columbia College Access Program for five more years, passed the House of Representatives last night.

H.R. 4012 was introduced by Chairman Davis and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton on March 23 of this year. The legislation is needed to keep the successful Tuition Assistance Grants (TAG) program going because the initiative, established by the D.C. College Access Act of 1999, would otherwise expire at the conclusion of the next fiscal year. H.R. 4012 re-authorizes the program for an additional five years,

“The College Access Program has been a key component of the District’s revitalization efforts in recent years, and I’m pleased the House has recognized how critical it is that Congress continues to support its partnership with the District in providing access to higher education resources,” Davis said. “Since the creation of the program, the number of high school graduates in the District continuing onto college has increased 28 percent. The national average, over the same period, was an increase of approximately 5 percent. That is an astounding record of success.”

H.R. 4012 passed the House unanimously on a voice vote. The Senate is expected to take up the bill soon.

More than 6,500 students have received tuition assistance since the program’s inception in 2000. The Tuition Assistance Grants program covers the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates, up to \$10,000 per year, for District of Columbia

high school graduates who attend public colleges and universities in other states. Additionally, the program provides up to \$2,500 annually in tuition assistance to D.C. high school graduates who attend private colleges and universities in the counties surrounding the District. Finally, an amendment to the legislation in 2001 authorized the program to provide up to \$2,500 annually to D.C. high school graduates who attend private Historically Black Colleges and Universities throughout the country.

There were two primary reasons why Congress chose to establish the College Access Program. First, it addresses the fact that the District of Columbia does not have a State university system for its high school graduates. The program essentially levels the playing field for high school graduates in the Nation's Capital by enabling them to attend colleges and universities around the country at in-state tuition rates.

Secondly, it helps deter tax-paying families in the District from moving to surrounding states in order to take advantage of in-state higher education options available to residents in other states, thus depriving the District of much needed stability and tax revenue.

The Government Reform Committee held a hearing on the program in March, where city leaders, education officials and a former TAG recipient testified to its success.

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